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FM AMEMBASSY ASTANA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7144
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE 2314
RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1676
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2382
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 1305
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2665
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 2955
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFAAA/DIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC 1871
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC 1721
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL

UNCLAS ASTANA 000002

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN, EUR/ACE, DRL

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SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN EXPRESSES PIQUE OVER HUMAN RIGHTS
CERTIFICATION

REFTEL: 09 ASTANA 2273

11. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

12. (SBU) SUMMARY: During a December 31 meeting (reftel), Kazakhstan's Deputy Foreign Minister Kairat Umarov raised concerns about the human-rights certification process. He told the Ambassador that Kazakhstan is ready to refuse all assistance under the certification. END SUMMARY.

13. (SBU) On December 31, Kazakhstan's Deputy Foreign Minister Kairat Umarov described to the Ambassador the Kazakhstani government's efforts to change Washington's human-rights certification process. According to Umarov, the Kazakhstani Embassy to the United States has worked "long and hard" on this issue and raised it with Secretary Clinton. Umarov explained that these efforts led to a "solution" whereby Kazakhstan would undergo the process but not be named in the law.

14. (SBU) Umarov expressed his concern that "a strange thing happened. We heard that this same situation was proposed to Uzbekistan, and Uzbekistan has now disappeared from the human-rights certification." He asserted that U.S. military assistance to Uzbekistan no longer depends upon the certification. (NOTE: This reference probably relates to "expanded international military education and training," which Uzbekistan receives. END NOTE.) While he stressed his "happiness" for Uzbekistan, Umarov highlighted Kazakhstani government frustration that the United States "is putting Kazakhstan on the same footing as Uzbekistan." (NOTE: Umarov clearly rejected the notion that Kazakhstan's human-rights record is analogous to Uzbekistan's. END NOTE.)

15. (SBU) Appearing frustrated, Umarov stated, "You appear to have different approaches for different countries. We did not request the assistance that is provided under the human rights certification. We are ready to refuse it if the certification is involved, because it is hurting the dignity of our country."

16. (SBU) COMMENT: Human Rights Certification, along with the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, was one of the first things senior Kazakhstani officials raised with the Ambassador when he first arrived in Astana in September 2008. We know that Kazakhstan's Ambassador Idrissov has raised this issue -- and the threat to reject assistance -- with U.S. officials in Washington. We believe

the threat is real. We will need to walk them back from committing one more self-inflicted wound -- but it won't be easy, in part because Kazakhstan recently seems to see irritation piling upon irritation. Even more important, we know that Kazakhstan is watching with great suspicion and concern the incremental improvement in U.S.-Uzbekistan relations. Kazakhstan has real reason to be proud of its substantial achievements, but it has yet to understand that it cannot win political points with threats and bullying. END COMMENT.

HOAGLAND